

# The Chartered Institute of Public Relations

## Rules: Appendix C – Conduct of Elections (December 2025)

### **1 Governance of the Institute**

The Institute is governed by a Board of Directors made up of the President, President-Elect, Immediate Past President, eight members elected by Council, and an Independent Chair.

Every year Members vote for half of Council (please see sections 2-9) and a President-Elect (please see section 10).

### **2 Election to Council**

#### **2.1 Nominations Committee**

The Nominations Committee is responsible for determining which prospective candidates will appear on the ballot paper sent out to voting Members. The Committee puts out a call for prospective candidates to serve on Council. Interested people respond to this call and are considered by the Nominations Committee. Those who are successful will appear on the ballot sent to voting Members, and the Nominations Committee shall determine the form of the ballot paper subject to the agreement of the Returning Officer. The Nominations Committee may also determine that the ballot should be divided into separate lists as appropriate and offer advice to Members on voting. After the selection of candidates is complete, the conduct of the election is the responsibility of the Returning Officer.

#### **2.2 Returning Officer**

The Board appoints a Returning Officer who is responsible for the good conduct of free and fair elections and is empowered to act with due discretion in the resolution of disputes according to the facts at the time. The Returning Officer may act, including suspending or cancelling an election, disqualifying candidates and requiring candidates to take what steps of redress the Returning Officer considers to be necessary, whether or not a complaint has been made. The Returning Officer shall be an impartial person, reporting to the Board. Candidates and prospective candidates may contact the Returning Officer to seek clarification of the regulations in regard to their own candidacy or activities.

For the purposes of this document, 'free' means that all members are given equal opportunity to cast their vote, and that candidates are not constrained from making their case except as set out in these regulations. 'Fair' means that the rules are applied impartially to all candidates, and that the rules do not have the effect of differentially limiting candidates' abilities to make their case to the members.

Having consulted with the Chair of the Appeals Panel and the Chief Executive of the Institute, the Returning Officer has the power to temporarily suspend or modify any part of these regulations and the timetable if they create a situation in which the election cannot be deemed to be free and fair. The Returning Officer shall have discretion to publish decisions to the candidates and nominators, or to the wider institute.

### **2.3 The Election Provider**

An independent Election Provider will administer the voting, which shall be electronic, unless a member requests the facility vote by telephone. The Election Provider issues voting instructions to all voting Members in good standing (item 3) and voting takes place using the Single Transferable Vote system. After a period of voting, the count takes place and the Election Provider sends a report to the Returning Officer.

### **2.4 The Independent Appeals Panel**

A candidate disqualified by the Returning Officer may appeal to the Independent Appeals Panel. The appeals panel shall comprise three people: two of them drawn from the members of the CIPR Professional Standards Panel, one of whom shall be a lay member, and a Chair appointed for a three-year term by the Board. The Chair must not have been a member of the CIPR at any time. A deputy Chair may be appointed by the Board, if at any time the Chair is unable to act.

### **2.5 Timetable**

The timetable for the election will be published on the website no later than 49 days before the beginning of the Voting Period. The election period commences with the opening of nominations and concludes with declaration of the result.

#### **2.5.1 The timetable shall include:**

Nominations period: not less than 2 weeks.

Voting period: normally 2 weeks.

Count and declaration of results: normally 2 working days.

### **3 Voting Members**

All full members of the Institute in good standing are allowed to vote. Members are governed by the Institute's Code of Conduct. They are permitted to campaign for the candidate of their choice, but, in so doing, must comply with these regulations as if they were the candidate. Members are encouraged to scrutinise candidates through asking fair questions both publicly and privately, and they may publish candidates' answers. For the purposes of this document, full membership includes Fellows, full Members, overseas members in the Fellow and full Member categories, retired Members and Honorary Fellows. It does not include Associate Members, Affiliate Members, Global Affiliate Members or Student Members.

For the purposes of this document, 'good standing' means that their membership is not in arrears and that they are not subject to suspension imposed as a result of a disciplinary procedure. Eligibility to vote shall be based on membership and standing at the latest practical time before data is sent to the Election Provider.

#### **3.1 Salaried employees of the Institute and recent salaried employees**

Salaried employees of the Institute who are also members of the Institute may vote, but they cannot stand for election, or make nominations, or assist in finding nominations, or provide any assistance to candidates in their campaigning except as set out in these regulations or as directed by the Returning Officer, in which case the same assistance shall be made available to all candidates competing in the same list. Former salaried employees who are also members of the Institute may make nominations but they are not eligible to stand for election until three years have elapsed between the termination of their employment and the close of nominations.

### **3.2 Candidates**

Full members of the Institute in good standing may put themselves forward to the Nominations Committee to stand as candidates on the following conditions:

- i) They have completed at least one cycle of CIPR CPD if they are MCIPR or FCIPR
- ii) They are not a salaried employee of the Institute or a recent employee
- iii) They have not had a sanction imposed on them during the last five years by a disciplinary committee.

The Nominations Committee determines which of the prospective candidates will go onto the ballot paper as candidates for Council.

Candidacy is confirmed when nominations are published at the start of the voting period. Candidates must not publicly campaign before this point, as set out in the section 'Canvassing', below.

Candidates have the right to a narrative, plain text, candidate's statement which will be published with nominations by the CIPR at the start of the voting period. Candidates' statements must focus on their record of professional service to the CIPR and to the public relations profession. The statement may include endorsements by members, but must not refer to any other member's candidacy.

If elected, candidates are expected to consider the best interests of the CIPR as a whole and not in the interests of those who have nominated or supported them.

Candidates undertake to uphold these regulations and to abide by the code of conduct. They may not defame or disparage another candidate, nor may they offer any inducement or incentive to voters in the promotion of their candidacy. They must not do anything which is likely to bring the CIPR or the electoral process into disrepute. Candidates must declare interests as appropriate, and, where they act in a voluntary capacity for the CIPR, specify in any public appearances whether these are in their voluntary capacity or their capacity as a candidate.

Candidates must not use personal data for which the CIPR is the data controller under the Data Protection Act (including the CIPR Register, CIPR Group email data or similar CIPR-generated lists).

Eligibility periods referred to above relate to the date of the close of nominations. For the purposes of these regulations, 'recent' employment by the CIPR means within three years; 'a disciplinary committee' refers to the Professional Standards Panel of the CIPR or the equivalent committee of a similar institute. A 'sanction' refers to any actual penalty, such as temporary suspension of membership, but does not include an advisory letter or warning.

### **4 Nominations**

Nominations are made using the form prescribed by the Nominations Committee.

- i. Current and recent employees of the CIPR may not nominate any candidate for a CIPR election.
- ii. The President and Vice Presidents may not nominate any candidates for Council-
- iii. By making a nomination, nominators provide an endorsement of the candidate on which the

- candidate may rely during their campaign.
- iv. The Nominations Committee shall certify to the Returning Officer as many of the individuals nominated as it considers appropriate to proceed onto the ballot for election.
  - v. The Nominations Committee shall ensure that the nominations remain confidential during the nomination period, save as may be necessary for the good conduct of the election
  - vi. Individuals nominated who are not certified and are thereby kept off the ballot may appeal against the decision of the Nominations Committee under the provisions in section 9 of these rules.
  - vii. The Returning Officer shall publish candidate statements from all candidates for election to Council on its website, together with the names of individual nominators at the same time, at the commencement of the voting period. Nominations will be published in alphabetical order by surname.

## **5 Candidate Statements**

Candidates may submit a candidate statement to the Returning Officer as set out above under 'Candidates'. This must reach the Returning Officer before close of nominations. The Returning Officer may require amendments to a candidate's statement. The Returning Officer shall not publish any statement which is not compliant with these regulations. The publication of other candidate statements shall not be delayed by a candidate's failure to provide a satisfactory statement. Compliant candidate statements will be published with formal nominations at the commencement of the voting period.

## **6 Canvassing and spending**

### **6.1 Canvassing before the publication of Nominations:**

- i. Prospective candidates may privately contact other members personally known to them to determine whether they, or another member on whose behalf they are enquiring, would have support if they stood as a candidate. They must not engage in any public discussion of prospective candidacy.
- ii. 'Private contact' includes:
  - Individual direct messages to individuals known personally to the prospective candidate on social media, email or by personal letter
  - Conversations with individual members or small groups of members gathered for the purpose of a CIPR meeting, including Board, Council, Committee, Group or other, but held before or after the business of the CIPR meeting
  - Informal social gatherings where the prospective candidate is personally known to all present.
- iii. 'Public' includes
  - All social media and electronic communication which can be viewed by individuals not personally known to the prospective candidate, such as open Facebook groups, tweets, email discussion lists or other public forums, as well as press, radio and television.
  - Events to which wider members of the Institute or the public are eligible to attend, even if none are actually in attendance
  - The formal agenda of any CIPR meeting or event.

## **6.2 Canvassing after the Publication of the Names of Candidates:**

- i. The publication of the names and statements of candidates marks the beginning of the voting period. Members may make public statements about their own candidacy or the candidacy of others whom they support.
- ii. Group committees may not endorse or support any candidates.
- iii. The following remain forbidden after the publication of nominations:
  - Using the floor of CIPR meetings, whether Board, Council, Committee, Group or other meetings, to seek support for a candidacy, unless the purpose of that part of that meeting is to allow candidates to seek support and unless invited to do so by the Chair of the meeting.
  - Use of personal data for which the CIPR is the data controller, as set out in Candidates, above.
- iv. From the beginning of the verification period to the end of the voting period, the CIPR and Influence websites, email newsletters and social media accounts shall make no reference to candidates standing for the position of President-elect other than to direct readers to candidate and voting information as directed by the Returning Officer.

## **7 Voting**

The election provider will organise voting using the Single Transferable Vote method for all members deemed eligible under Section 3 Voting instructions shall be issued to all members by email. Members may vote online or, on request, by telephone.

Names will appear in the voting instructions in the order which the count will take place, sub-sorted alphabetically by surname. Members may cast as many votes as there are seats available.

Where the number of candidates for a role or list is equal to or less than the number of seats available, the candidates will be declared elected unopposed.

## **8 Disputes and Complaints**

Where a member of the Institute, including a candidate, believes that an issue has arisen which prevents the election from being free, fair and in accordance with the regulations, they have the right to raise an informal concern with the Returning Officer, or to make a formal complaint in writing to the Returning Officer. Where practicable, the Returning Officer will attempt to deal with informal concerns expediently so as to remedy the situation, if necessary, avoiding disruption to the election. In the case of a formal complaint, the Returning Officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint, and specify a timescale in which it will be reviewed, which will normally be within two weeks. Announcement of the election results will only be delayed if the Returning Officer deems this necessary before a complaint is resolved.

Informal concerns must be raised during the electoral period in which they arise.

Formal complaints must be made in writing no later than 3pm on the second working day after the close of voting. (See 2.4 5 Timetable above for the terminology of the periods in question). A formal complaint must specify which section of the rules is alleged to have been breached, a description of what has occurred, and evidence or a starting point for investigation, such as the contact details of a witness. Alternatively, where the complaint alleges that activity has rendered the process not free or not fair, irrespective of adherence to the regulations, the complaint must set out in cogent prose why this is the case, and provide either evidence or a starting point for an investigation, as above. Any complaint which fails to satisfy these requirements will not be accepted as substantive. Candidates and their supporters should at no time publicise any complaints they have in regard to other candidates, which must be submitted solely to the Returning Officer. Furthermore, any formal complaint must be made within two days of the close of the period to which it relates.

The Returning Officer may respond with one or more of the following:

- i) rule that the activity is within the rules
- ii) require a candidate, supporter or group to cease from a particular kind of activity
- iii) require a candidate, supporter or group to amend or withdraw a publication, and to take steps to contact those who have already received it informing them of the fact
- iv) publish a reprimand
- v) require a candidate to suspend all campaigning activity for a period of time
- vi) disqualify a candidate, which may include disqualifying a successful candidate after the result has been announced
- vii) annul or suspend the entire electoral process
- viii) refer a candidate, member, supporter or group to the Institute's Professional Standards Panel
- ix) refer the matter to the police.

## **9. Appeals**

### **9.1 Appeals against a decision by the Nominations Committee**

- i. The individual has 48 hours to appeal following receipt of notification that they have not been certified
- ii. The individual can appeal only on the basis that the process was not correctly followed leading to an unfair result.
- iii. The appeals panel shall consist of three individuals drawn from the main pool of the CIPR Appeals Panel. The panel shall meet for a single session to consider all appeals lodged within 48 hours and will render its judgement at the end of the session.
- iv. Evidence to be provided for the appeal shall consist of the original application by the prospective candidate; written notes and scoring charts by the panel at the interview, if an interview took place; any additional materials the appellant wishes to provide which they maintain demonstrate that the process was not followed and led to an unfair result.
- v. The appellant must supply any additional materials they wish to present at the point that the appeal is lodged.
- vi. The appeal must be made in writing with a specification of what part(s) of the process was inadequately implemented.
- vii. The appellant must agree to abide by the panel's decision, and to maintain confidentiality throughout the process.
- viii. Since all prospective candidates agreed to abide by the published process before they submitted their application, the appellant should not rely on arguments that the published process is flawed.
- ix. Only one appeal per prospective candidate will be entertained, and only materials provided at the point of appeal will be considered.
- x. The appeals panel meets virtually within 48 hours of the appeal being lodged. The appeals panel may delegate one of its members to lead the review and to present the findings to the rest of the panel.
- xi. The panel will come to an agreement on the outcome, by vote if necessary. In the case of an abstention, the casting vote goes to the chair of the appeals panel. Should all three members abstain, the appeal is not upheld.
- xii. The panel's sole remit is to determine whether a failure of process led to an unfair result. Where the process was followed but the result was deemed unfair, the Board is notified with non-binding advice on what aspects of the process or regulations might be problematic.

- xiii. The panel must consider two questions: “Was the process followed correctly?” and “Was the result fair?”
- xiv. There are four possible outcomes:
- The process was flawed and the result was unfair — the appeal is upheld and the prospective candidate proceeds to the next stage — the nominations committee is notified of the failing.
  - The process was flawed, but the result was, on review, fair notwithstanding the flaws — the appeal is not upheld, and the Nominations Committee is notified of the failing
  - The process was valid and the result was fair — the appeal is not upheld
  - The process was valid but the result was unfair — the appeal is not upheld, since the prospective candidate agreed to abide by the process — the process will be reviewed by the Board
- xv. If the determination is that the process was valid by the result was unfair, the panel identifies that a candidate was suitably qualified to proceed, but, despite a correct process, this did not result in the candidate proceeding. This can only be for reasons foreseen neither by the Board which framed the rules, nor by the panel which implemented them. The Appeals panel is not in a position to rewrite the rules, and therefore must refer them back to the Board.

## **9.2 Appeals against a decision by the Returning Officer**

- i. Where a candidate is disqualified, the Returning Officer will immediately notify the Chair of the Independent Appeals panel that an appeal may be lodged.
- ii. A candidate shall have the right of appeal against their disqualification. No member may appeal against a failure to impose a particular sanction on another member.
- iii. Where a successful candidate has been disqualified, the candidate with the next highest votes is elected. In the event of a rerun election, a disqualified candidate may not re-stand.
- iv. The panel may rule only either to uphold or not uphold a decision of the Returning Officer. Its rulings are final and must be delivered in writing. If it does not uphold the decision of the Returning Officer it may decide what course of action must follow as a consequence.
- v. The panel shall adjudicate as quickly as is practicable but shall otherwise have discretion to manage its business as it sees fit, although it may choose to be guided by the general principles (such as natural justice) followed by the Professional Standards Panel and set out in the CIPR Regulations Governing Complaints Relating to Professional Conduct.
- vi. In considering any potential complaint relating to conduct during an election, the Regulatory Consultant and the Professional Standards Panel shall have regard to the decisions of the Returning Officer and, where relevant, of the independent appeals panel and of its Chair.

## **10 Election of a President-Elect**

10.1 The election of a President-Elect shall follow the same process as set out above for the election to Council, except that:

- Rule 2.1 shall not apply and nominations for President-Elect must be made to the Returning Officer in the form and to the timetable they require within the regulations of the Institute. All powers delegated to the Nominations Committee in dealing with prospective candidates for election to Council shall be delegated to the Returning Officer in dealing with prospective candidates for President-Elect.
- Rule 3.2 shall not apply to candidates for President-Elect, who must meet the eligibility requirements set out in the Regulations (currently, to be a Chartered Practitioner)

10.2 The following additional rules shall also apply:

- 10.2.1 The Board of Directors may nominate a candidate for the post of President-Elect. Unless the Board determines to do this, The President and Vice Presidents may not nominate any candidates for President-Elect.
- 10.2.2 Any candidate for the post of President-Elect who is not nominated by the Board must be nominated by ten individual voting Members in good standing.
- 10.2.3 Candidates for the post of President-Elect will be obliged to declare all social media handles in their own name or under pseudonyms, and all affiliations and associations they have that may have a bearing on the reputation of the CIPR. They will be vetted by CIPR staff who will report to the Nominations Committee, and they will only go onto the ballot if the Nominations Committee certifies to the Returning Officer that in its view, there is no reason that the candidate should not be allowed to stand for election.
- 10.2.4 Group committees may not endorse, or use their CIPR email newsletters or CIPR social media accounts to campaign for, candidates seeking election as President-Elect.
- 10.2.5 In the vote for President-Elect, members may vote for as many candidates as they wish, in preference order. Votes will be counted using the Single Transferable Vote system.